

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	16 October 2013
3.	Title:	Core Strategy Examination
4.	Directorate:	Environment & Development Services

5. Summary

The report seeks delegated authority for the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development to approve public consultation on modifications to the Core Strategy arising from the examination in public.

6. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet provide delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development to approve public consultation on modifications to the Core Strategy following the Examination in Public.

7. Proposals and Details

Background

On 6 June the Core Strategy, which forms part of Rotherham's statutory Local Plan, was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Inspector Richard Hollox has been appointed to conduct the examination to determine whether the Core Strategy is sound.

The hearing sessions are scheduled to take place at Riverside House beginning on 22 October and running over 10 days, concluding on 8 November.

Consulting on any Modifications to the Core Strategy

Throughout the examination process and in light of discussion at the hearing sessions a schedule of minor changes to the Core Strategy will be compiled. In addition, the Inspector may recommend Main Modifications to the document in order to ensure that the Core Strategy is sound and can be adopted.

Following the close of hearing sessions the Council will need to consult for a 6 week period on these Modifications and send any responses to the Inspector to enable him to take any representations into account when he prepares his report. This report would then recommend that the Core Strategy was sound subject to the inclusion of the Modifications.

To ensure the efficient completion of the examination and to enable the Inspector to finalise his report as soon as possible it will be important that the Council is prepared to start consultation on these modifications (should this be required) as soon as practically possible following the close of the hearing sessions.

Normally consultation on Development Plan Documents is approved by Cabinet. However, as the Main Modifications will be suggested by the Inspector to make the document sound, there is little opportunity for Members to influence these changes prior to consultation starting. The Council would still have opportunity to comment on the Modifications as part of the consultation process, along with all other interested parties.

In view of the above there is a concern that seeking Cabinet approval prior to consultation on any modifications would add further delay to the start of consultation, extend the period before the Inspector can complete his report, and subsequently delay adoption of the Core Strategy.

In order to expedite the process it is requested that Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development be granted the delegated authority to approve consultation on any proposed modifications to the Core Strategy arising from the examination. The Council's views on the Modifications can be determined during the consultation period and endorsed by Cabinet prior to submission to the inspector.

Final adoption of the Core Strategy remains a decision to be taken by Members (via Cabinet and Full Council) following receipt of the Inspector's report.

8. Finance

There are no direct costs arising from this report. Costs incurred in relation to consultation on any proposed Modifications will be met by Planning Policy.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

- The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) express a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development. Our UDP policies only continue to have any weight where they are in accordance with the NPPF. It is important that Rotherham's Core Strategy is in place as soon as possible to provide an up-to-date planning policy framework for the Borough's future growth and development.
- A failure to achieve timely progress on the Local Plan could delay the spatial strategy required to guide future decision-making on planning applications.
- Having a Local Plan in place will provide a steer for any neighbourhood plans that may emerge under the provisions of the Localism Act.
- Failure to make progress with the Local Plan risks delayed provision of the new homes and employment opportunities that the Borough needs.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The implementation of the Local Plan will make a positive contribution to all of Rotherham's Regeneration priorities. When adopted, the Core Strategy and supporting documents will further the objectives of the Corporate Plan and support the delivery of the Rotherham Sustainable Community Strategy by:

- providing sufficient good quality homes
- ensuring well designed, decent affordable housing
- providing employment land to meet the needs of the modern economy and support sustainable communities through access to employment opportunities
- promoting the "town centre first" policy approach to help the regeneration and renaissance of Rotherham Town Centre and other town, district and local centres within the borough.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Core Strategy Examination website:

http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/1004/planning_policy/2083/core_strategy/2

This report has been prepared in consultation with Legal & Democratic Services.

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